

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05

SCCT-01 ACDA-05 AID-05 PC-01 /070 W

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P R 191515Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5537

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0166

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LT

SUBJECT: CONTINUED RUMORS, PRESS REPORTS, OF INTERNAL SECURITY
THREAT

REF: MASERU 114 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. BLOEMFONTEIN NEWSPAPER, "THE FRIEND", TODAY CARRIES FRONTPAGE STORY HEADLINED "LESOTHO INVASION FEARS MOUNT" BASED ON STATEMENTS ISSUED BY LESOTHO COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND BY SIX MAIN LESOTHO CHURCHES. STORY, ASIDE FROM HEADLINES, IS STRAIGHT REPORT OF POLICE AND CHURCH STATEMENTS BROADCAST ON RADIO LESOTHO TWO WEEKS AGO AND REPEATED THIS WEEK. CHURCHES' STATEMENT OF THIS WEEK HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT AMPLIFIED IN THAT IT REFERS TO REPORT OF "A GROUP OF BASOTHO OUTSIDE LESOTHO (WHO) ARE PREPARING TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON THE COUNTRY." PREVIOUS CHURCH STATEMENT MERELY CALLED UPON ALL BASOTHO TO OBSERVE PEACE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. EMBASSY HAS DETECTED NO GENUINE SIGNS

OF ALARM WITHIN GOL. A RANKING CIVIL SERVANT, WHO IS WELL-CONNECTED IN GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH CIRCLES, HAS TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER HE BELIEVES WHOLE STORY IS "POPPYCOCK", THAT NO ATTACK IS BEING PLANNED FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE COUNTRY, THAT TO EXTENT GOL OFFICIAL CONCERN, IF ANY, EXISTS, IT IS BASED ON BAD POLICE INTELLIGENCE, AND THAT HEADS OF CHURCHES DO NOT BELIEVE ANY THREAT EXISTS BUT HAVE DECIDED TO ISSUE STATEMENT TO SHOW THAT CHURCHES ARE EVEN-HANDED IN CONDEMNING ANY THREAT OF VIOLENCE WHETHER FROM GOVERNMENT OR OPPOSITION. (LAST AUGUST, CHURCHES ISSUED SHARP PUBLIC STATEMENT CONDEMNING GOVERNMENT FOR VIOLENCE, 75 MASERU 854). THIS SOURCE ALSO REPORTS THAT MANY BASOTHO, ESPECIALLY OF THE OPPOSITION, ARE BECOMING FRIGHTENED THAT GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS MAY PRESAGE SOME MOVE AGAINST THEM.

3. IN EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT, POLICE COMMISSIONER'S AND CHURCHES' STATEMENTS, AND CERTAINLY NEWSPAPER HEADLINE RE"INVASION FEARS" MUST BE TREATED WITH GREATEST SKEPTICISM.
HAUGHT

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NNN

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